



NORTHEAST IDAHO

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON, & TETON COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The October 2003 unemployment rate for the Bonneville Labor Market Area (LMA) was 3.8 percent, an increase of five-tenths of a percentage point from September (see Northeast Idaho Table 1). The increase was due in part to this year's early harvest, which resulted in many agriculture workers being laid off in mid-October, which is earlier than normal. The October unemployment rate was the lowest reported for the state's eight LMAs and Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). The Bonneville LMA saw an increase of 2,010 people in the *Civilian Labor Force* and an increase of 470 unemployed people from September to October. Year-over-year, the LMA's unemployment rate remained unchanged. Bonneville and Butte Counties experienced decreases in unemployment while Bingham and Jefferson Counties had increases. Overall, however, the LMA's *Civilian Labor Force* decreased 100 people. The unemployment rate for Idaho Falls, the largest city in the LMA, increased five-tenths of a percentage point month-over-month to 3.7 percent, which was one-tenth of a percentage point below the October 2002 rate.

Eight of the nine counties comprising Northeast Idaho showed increases in the unemployment rate over the month. The one exception was Teton County, which decreased six-tenths of a percentage point to 3.5 percent. October's unemployment rate for Northeast Idaho was 3.6 percent. Madison County had the lowest unemployment rate for the region and for the entire state at 1.6 percent; Lemhi County had the highest unemployment rate in the region at 6.6 percent. Teton County relies heavily on winter tourism, so the decrease is a sign that the economy might be returning to normal after be-

Northeast Idaho Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Bonneville, Bingham, Butte, and Jefferson Counties

	Oct 2003*	Sept 2003	Oct 2002	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	82,920	80,910	83,020	2.5	-0.1
Unemployment	3,160	2,690	3,140	17.5	0.6
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.8	3.3	3.8		
Total Employment	79,760	78,220	79,880	2.0	-0.2
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	83,150	82,270	84,140	1.1	-1.2
Unemployment	2,650	2,730	2,650	-2.9	0.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.2	3.3	3.1		
Total Employment	80,500	79,540	81,490	1.2	-1.2
JOB BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	64,330	65,040	64,340	-1.1	0.0
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	10,950	11,180	10,210	-2.1	7.2
Natural Resources & Mining	70	70	90	0.0	-22.2
Construction	5,960	6,160	4,940	-3.2	20.6
Manufacturing	4,920	4,950	5,180	-0.6	-5.0
Food Manufacturing	2,440	2,370	2,280	3.0	7.0
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	310	320	280	-3.1	10.7
Machinery Manufacturing	450	490	460	-8.2	-2.2
Other Manufacturing	1,720	1,770	2,160	-2.8	-20.4
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	53,380	53,860	54,130	-0.9	-1.4
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	14,270	14,230	14,860	0.3	-4.0
Wholesale Trade	4,780	4,720	5,150	1.3	-7.2
Retail Trade	7,550	7,520	7,870	0.4	-4.1
Utilities	100	110	100	-9.1	0.0
Transportation	1,840	1,880	1,740	-2.1	5.7
Information	790	790	870	0.0	-9.2
Financial Activities	1,940	2,050	2,270	-5.4	-14.5
Professional & Business Services	11,600	11,780	11,710	-1.5	-0.9
Educational & Health Services	6,490	6,500	6,110	-0.2	6.2
Leisure & Hospitality	5,010	5,320	4,960	-5.8	1.0
Other Services	2,070	2,090	2,310	-1.0	-10.4
Government Education	5,020	4,580	5,040	9.6	-0.4
Government Administration	6,190	6,520	6,000	-5.1	3.2

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

ing affected for the past two years by the nation's economic slump. The total labor force of Northeast Idaho for October was 88,410. Year-over-year changes in the unemployment rates were minimal, with the exception of a 1.6 percentage point decrease in Custer County to 6.0 percent in October 2003. However, since the county population is less than 2,500, it takes very little change in the number of unemployed people to make a large percentage change. Custer County has had an unemployment rate ranging between 5.4 percent and 7.6 percent in 2003 compared to 2002 when it ranged from 6.1 percent to 10.5 percent. Mine closures over the past five years have affected Custer County's employment numbers.

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs in the LMA decreased by 710 jobs from September to October as both tourism and construction declined due to the time of year. *Goods-Producing Industries* showed an overall decrease of 230 jobs (primarily in *Construction*), while *Service-Providing Industries* showed a decrease of 480 jobs (primarily in the *Leisure & Hospitality* and *Government Administration* sectors). The large decreases in these sectors are expected in the fall when tourism and summer activities come to an end. The largest monthly increase is in *Government Education*, which was expected as schools headed back in session.

Year-over-year, the change in total *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* was marginal with a loss of 10 jobs. Decreases in *Service-Providing Industries* slightly offset the gains in *Goods-Producing Industries*. *Construction* experienced the largest increase—1,020 jobs—with plenty of activity in both Jefferson and Bonneville Counties. The other large increase was in *Educational & Health Services*—380 jobs—as hospitals, medical specialists, and clinics have either remained strong or added new jobs. Heavier losses were noted in *Trade*, as both *Retail* and *Wholesale Trade* lost over 300 jobs each. A nation-wide fad of high-protein, low-fat diets has weakened the potato market, but strengthened the cattle market, although the impact of the recent discovery of a diseased cow in Washington has yet to be measured. Because fresh pack potatoes warehouses are an important component of *Wholesale Trade* in Northeast Idaho, the weak market has resulted in a loss of jobs. *Retail Trade* was in between seasons and the mild weather tempered the sale of winter supplies and related products. *Financial Activities* also decreased by over 300 as last year's struggle in the stock market turned away some wary investors who are shifting interest to real estate instead. The LMA seems to be rich in that area.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Bonneville County

- The Snake Bite restaurant moved from River Parkway to the former location of DD Mudd at the corner of Park Avenue and A Street, a few blocks on the other side of the Snake River. The restaurant expanded seating capacity from 27 to 68 and added room for storage. With the majority of the customer base located in downtown Idaho Falls, the restaurant is now in the heart of the city and allows for larger group events.
- Zion's Bank announced it would move across the river to the Taylor Crossing on the River. The bank will be located in the newest large building

at Taylor Crossing on the River on the north side of Pancheri Drive. The mortgage/construction company, along with the main branch, will be moving to the same location. Currently the two businesses are located in separate buildings within a block of each other between Memorial Drive and Capitol Avenue. The new building will open in early 2004.

- Ronson's, a downtown sporting goods store that has been in operation for nearly 40 years at the same location, is closing because the owner is retiring. The business is marking down all inventory for a closing sale. The store started as a wall-paper and paint store, then brought in toys and now sells a little bit of everything including skis, snowboards, bikes, and the accessories that go with them.

Fremont County

- Ashton Memorial Inc. is opening a clinic in Island Park in the spring of 2004. The clinic will be located in a building at Pond's Lodge that is currently used for laundry and showers. It is being remodeled to meet the needs of the clinic. The facility will be open three days per week, but will increase if the demand warrants. Dr. Michael Packer and Nurse Practitioner Roxanna Holmes will provide medical services. Ashton Memorial will provide the building, utilities, and maintenance. Advisory committee members for the clinic are being sought.

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